

NEW YORK HERALD

PUBLISHED BY THE NEW YORK HERALD CORPORATION, 250 BROADWAY, TELEPHONE, WORTH 10,000.

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THE BRITISH DEBT MISSION.

Two British business men of unusual caliber are on their way to Washington to discuss on behalf of the British Government the funding and interest of the British war debt to America. The cordial welcome that awaits them is but due to the representatives of a country which is making a very real and strenuous effort to meet its war liabilities. They are, moreover, men of an unusual type.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, STANLEY BALDWIN, is a middle-aged, cultured Englishman, who has carried away with him from Harrow and Cambridge a more lasting appreciation of classical literature than is usually to be found in the luggage of departing students. Reading and his pipe have been his chief solace in a life of great business activity in the Welsh steel trade and on the board of the Great Western Railway.

It was as a business man that he was first taken into the Government when he became secretary to BONAR LAW, and as Financial Secretary to the Treasury from 1917 to 1921 he became closely acquainted with the problems of war finance.

It was as a business man that he began the breakup of the Lloyd George Government this year when he resigned from the Board of Trade on account of the failure to apply the protection of industries act in the face of Lancashire free trade clamor. Politically and as a business man he is a strong Conservative and a believer in the ability of British trade to recover its position in the world. He advocates, if European restoration is delayed, that Great Britain should seek to consolidate her position by coordination of her imperial trade resources.

The second member of the British debt mission, MONTAGU COLLET NORMAN, is also a Cambridge man in whom literary tastes have not been killed by business occupations. He is afflicted with shyness but has an almost mischievous sense of humor. He is a music lover of sure and delicate taste, has a strange knowledge of rare woods and a good collection of the art of the cabinet maker. Physically he has nothing of the English financier about him, and rather resembles JOSEPH CONRAD in the foreign distinction of his features.

It is not as a connoisseur of fine woods and old volumes that he comes here but as a Governor of the Bank of England who has had the rare but not unprecedented honor paid him by the mighty financial interests of London of having been elected for a second term of office at the bank. As a partner in Brown, Shipley & Co. he is familiar with American business men and methods and he is no newcomer to this country.

Both BALDWIN and NORMAN combine with their somewhat Balfourian culture a great capacity for hard work, an impatience of loose and superfluous speech, unusual powers of clear exposition and a desire to face and state facts fairly and reasonably. They represent the solid determination of Britain to meet her liabilities toward America as speedily as possible, and they regard the problem of arranging terms of payment and interest as one of pure business divorced entirely, as such international dealings should be, from the distorting influences of sentiment.

Boy Babies After Wars.

The New York Nursery and Child's Hospital reports that 1919, 1920 and 1921 each showed an increase in the excess of male over female babies born in that institution. From the usual ratio of 104 male babies to every 100 female babies in 1913 the excess rose to 106 in 1919, to 109 in 1920 and 110 in 1921. The medical staff of the hospital say the ratio may be lower this year.

It has been contended by some biologists, but not yet definitely established, that every war brings an increase in the excess of male over female babies in the combatant countries. The excess of male births is a normal condition in all Western countries, and even in China and other Eastern countries the preponderance of girls has not been definitely proved, the statistics being unreliable.

In Great Britain the excess of boys increased during the war, reached its high mark in 1919 and then fell away. Paris hospitals report a condition similar to that just observed in the New York Nursery and Child's Hospital.

In contradiction of such indications as these it must be kept in mind that although Germany also showed an increase in male births during the war the rise began in Prussia some time before the war. Furthermore, an investigation of birth statistics for the period of the civil war disclosed no positive result in support of the theory that nature makes automatic provision for the

adjustment of the balance which war destroys.

The positive evidence afforded by statistics that show an increase is not, however, the only argument which can be used in support of this theory. No neutral country has duplicated the change occurring in several of the combatant countries. The theory gains additional strength from the high proportion of boys born in new colonies.

Nor would such an effort on the part of nature seem extraordinary when the normal ratio of the sexes is considered. More boys than girls are born apparently because the mortality among male children is higher, especially during the first year. In the years of early youth an equilibrium between the sexes is established. Later the proportion of females increases, owing to the greater hazards encountered by the mature male.

Why Women Talk So Much. Distinguished psychologist though he is, Professor BRILL of New York University has the wrong slant on the reason women talk so much. He suggests that as woman never has had to perform acts that absorbed all her intellectual energy she has "taken it out in talk."

The fact is that human beings talk about the things in which they are interested. Man's field of interest is limited. He speaks of his job, his favorite pastime and the subjects of the front page headlines. Woman has all of life, and particularly its important trifles, to discuss. The house, the baby, the food, the clothing—these are the things that have kept the race alive and happy. Woman is the advocate of first principles. If she does not talk solemnly about the hugeness of Betelgeuse it is because she considers the new gas stove more important; and if she does not chatter about the new boundaries of Europe it is because she prefers to talk about her new clothesline. Why should she waste time discussing radio when she can listen in on the prattle of her child?

If women were to be silent, speech would die. There is not ambition left in man alone to keep the spoken word alive. Woman undoubtedly invented speech; maybe it was some prehistoric dame whose gestures did not start her husband rapidly enough in the direction of material for dinner. As for the intellectual energy that Dr. BRILL talks about, let him go down town at the luncheon hour and look over the faces of the men and women out for a stroll. The girls tripping along Broadway and Nassau street are, compared with the men who waddle near them, radiant engines of intellect. The girls project immeasurable quantities of talk and cheer. The men are dumb. Their intellectual energy is concentrated on deciding whether they will eat two sandwiches or three.

The Great School Mystery.

The latest sensation in the school department would be ludicrous if it were not tragic in its relation to the youth of the city. We have all laughed at the absurdity of the man who lost the bass drum; but here comes the Board of Education with the admission—or complaint—that it has lost several thousand sittings in the public schools!

According to the President of the Board, Mr. RYAN, the city has spent in the last year \$22,000,000 to provide 40,000 additional sittings in the public schools. In the same period the increase in registration was only 19,198. By the simplest arithmetic it is plain that the number of part time pupils should have been reduced more than 20,000. But, says President RYAN in all solemnity, he is informed that the number of part time pupils instead of diminishing has increased 26,000.

The Superintendent of Schools, Dr. ETTINGER, does not agree with Mr. RYAN's astounding declaration that "approximately half of the sittings provided at a cost of \$22,135,834 have been lost." But even Superintendent ETTINGER's theory of a miscount of seats does not explain away the mystery. "In the light of the cold facts," says President RYAN, "I think the taxpayers are entitled to an explanation." They are, indeed, and they will await with curiosity the result of an investigation which the Board has set afoot.

The schools are the most important department of a huge corporation of 6,000,000 stockholders, known as the city of New York. There are 800,000 school children. They require more than 500 schools. They are instructed by 23,000 teachers. The city spends as much as \$80,000,000 a year for teachers' salaries, new schools and books. It has never been niggardly. The people know that the schools make or break the future of their children.

Now the managers of this supremely important department of the corporation report that, after spending \$22,000,000 for new sittings, they cannot find half the sittings. Twenty-two million dollars is more than the Bethlehem Steel Corporation made in profits last year. It is more than big corporations, with the exception of half a dozen, spend yearly in the extension of their plants. But suppose that the manager of the construction department of a successful corporation were to report to his directors that after spending \$22,000,000 for new buildings and machinery he could not find half of the improvements he had made! The directors would not believe him at first; afterward they would discharge him, even if he were as honest as the saint.

The seven members of the Board of Education serve without pay.

That is all very fine and praise-worthy. But it would be better for the city to have a board of one expert—who would know where and when and why new schools should be built and whether the sittings were occupied or not—and pay him \$100,000 a year than to have seven amateurs serving as a duty and not sure whether eight or ten million dollars worth of sittings were lost, strayed or stolen.

Put the conduct of our schools alongside the conduct of any large business house and view the contrast. Suppose that two years ago the United States Trucking Corporation, wishing to solve the problems of its intricate and congested business, had called upon seven respected citizens, sentimentally interested in trucking but not conversant with its details, to boss the puzzling job in their spare time and without pay—what would the stockholders have said? What would have happened when the chairman of the benevolent seven reported that, after buying a hundred new trucks, he found that half of them had been lost? But of course the trucking company did not do such a foolish thing. It hired A. SARRIS at a big salary to boss the job.

And the schools of New York, in value both intrinsic and sentimental, are a great many times larger than the trucking company. How long are they to be run as backwoods schools were run a hundred years ago?

Some Old Fiddlers.

The musical center of the United States was temporarily shifted last week to Alabama, when Huntsville entertained the Old Fiddlers merely because they were old and fiddlers and offered to them an opportunity to compete for fame and the joy of playing.

It was again the Old Fiddlers' contest which gives its musical flavor to Huntsville for a few hours in every year. The players brought their own instruments, which in some cases had passed down from father to son, or even from grandfather to grandson.

To the present proud possessors. They had tone enough for the occasion. They may not have come from Cremona; probably there was not a remote descendant of a Stradivarius or a Guarnerius or an Am